

these disparities can be attributed to differences in education, experience, and occupation—which themselves often reflect troubling inequities—several studies confirm that a significant pay gap persists even after we account for these factors.

My Administration has worked hard to ensure that every American is treated with fairness and dignity in the workplace, and this year I proposed a \$27 million equal pay initiative in my fiscal year 2001 budget to combat unfair pay practices against women. This initiative includes \$10 million in funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to identify more quickly and respond more effectively to wage discrimination. The initiative would also enable the EEOC to launch a public service campaign to educate employees and employers about their rights and responsibilities under equal pay laws. In addition, the initiative includes funding for the Department of Labor to train women for jobs they have not traditionally held, such as those in the high-paying technology sector, and to help employers recruit and train qualified women for nontraditional occupations.

I have also urged the Congress to strengthen existing wage discrimination laws by promptly passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. This proposed legislation would provide increased penalties for equal pay violations; prohibit employers from punishing employees who share salary information with co-workers; and provide funding for research on wage discrimination and for increased training for EEOC employees who work on wage discrimination cases.

Throughout the decades, working women have persevered in their struggle for equal pay, buoyed by an unshakable faith in their own skills and self-worth and a firm commitment to the ideals of our democracy. On National Equal Pay Day, I urge all Americans to join the crusade to secure equal pay for women and to create a just and honorable work environment in which all our citizens are rewarded fairly for their talents, experience, and contributions.

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United

States of America, do hereby proclaim May 11, 2000, as National Equal Pay Day. I call upon government officials, law enforcement agencies, business leaders, educators, and the American people to recognize the full value of the skills and contributions of women in the labor force. I urge all employers to review their wage practices and ensure that all their employees are paid equitably for their work.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

**William J. Clinton**

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 15.

### **Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Conferees on the Patients' Bill of Rights and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 11, 2000*

#### ***Africa and Caribbean Basin Trade Legislation***

**The President.** First of all, I would like to thank this very impressive array of Senate and House Members for coming, in the midst of quite a busy time up on the Hill, as we try to work out the remaining issues to get a strong Patients' Bill of Rights passed.

I'd like to begin just by expressing my gratitude to, most recently the Senate, but also to the House, for the truly historic Africa/Caribbean Basin trade bill that passed by, I think, 77 votes in the Senate today. And this bill passed with big bipartisan majorities in both Houses. And it's an example of the kind of thing we can do if we work together. And I'm very grateful to the Congress for that and very much looking forward to this bill.

#### ***Patients' Bill of Rights***

Last October the House passed the Norwood-Dingell bill by a big majority, but the conferees have not been able to agree on a bill which could then be taken back to

the Senate and the House. So this meeting is to determine what the issues are, what the prospects are for resolving them, to make it clear to these Members that I will offer anybody in the White House, starting with me, day or night, to try to help resolve this and hopefully to get a bill out.

I think it's fair to say that most of us, maybe all of us, really want a bill, not an issue, not a debate. We'd like to pass a bill. And so I'm looking forward to this meeting, and I want to thank you all for coming.

**Q.** What are the prospects for approving it this year?

**The President.** Well, you should ask us all after the meeting. *[Laughter]*

#### **Security at the State Department**

**Q.** Mr. President, the FBI testified today there are possible intelligence officers operating as accredited reporters at the State Department. Does that concern you, sir?

**The President.** Does it concern you? I should be asking if it concerns you. *[Laughter]* No, I don't want to make light of this. Of course, the testimony today was the first that I had heard that assertion, and obviously it has to be looked into.

I would have thought that you might have docile intelligence officers masquerading as hostile reporters. *[Laughter]*

#### **Social Security**

**Q.** Mr. President, this morning you told Diane Rehm about some predictions about what you thought George W. Bush might do if he's elected President, in terms of tax cuts, Supreme Court appointments. Do you also think that he would destroy Social Security by privatizing it, as the Vice President has charged?

**The President.** I don't want to talk about the campaign here. I'm here trying to get something done. I'll be glad to answer—at some appropriate time, I'll tell you what I think ought to be done on Social Security, although I'm pretty well on the record on that. But I don't think this is an appropriate thing for me to discuss right now.

#### **Permanent Normal Trade Relations Status for China**

**Q.** Mr. President, do you have any concern about comments by Majority Whip Delay yesterday that he may not be doing quite as well as he had hoped getting Republican votes for the China bill?

**The President.** No, because I've noticed he's quite effective at getting votes when the time comes—sometimes when I like it and sometimes when I don't. And I think he wants us to do our part, and I'm doing my best. I think in the end, especially after President Ford and President Carter and all those former administration members came, and after the, I think, very important reports in the press today about the Chinese dissidents favoring this vote, I think we'll get there. We've just got a lot of hard work to do.

#### **Northern Ireland Peace Process**

**Q.** Do you have an update on the situation in Northern Ireland, Mr. President? And do you foresee a situation where you would be able to travel over there to celebrate some success?

**The President.** Well, we're not done yet. There's still a matter to be resolved about what exactly the new police force would be called and how it can be constituted so that both Protestants and Catholics will join the police force and be a part of the unified police force, and what the political problems this issue present to both sides are.

I think what the IRA did in agreeing to put these weapons beyond use and put them in these cachement areas and allow them to be inspected was a terrific step forward and a great credit to Gerry Adams and Michael McGuinness—Martin McGuinness—and everybody else who worked on it.

But we've got one last issue, and I don't think anybody ought to be celebrating until we resolve the one last issue.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year

May 11, 2000

**The President.** Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Let me begin by welcoming you to the Rose Garden and saying, I'm grateful that it's not too hot and it's not too cold. Sounds like one of those books we used to read when I was 6 years old—it's just right. [Laughter] Actually, we got rained out here yesterday at an event. And we had two events earlier today, and it was quite warm. So this is—you're here at just the right time.

I'd also like to thank the representatives of the Marine Band who played for us today. This is their third event today, and they've done a great job. Thank you very much.

I want to thank Secretary Riley, my friend and co-worker for better education for well over 20 years now. Even my adversaries will concede that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had, and I am very grateful to him.

I welcome the other representatives of the Department of Education and the executive director of the Council of Chief State Schools, Gordon Ambach; Scholastic, Inc., Senior Vice President Ernie Fleishman and all those from Scholastic who are here. And I want to recognize the president of the National Education Association, Bob Chase, who has done a wonderful job representing all the teachers of our country here in Washington, including those in the AFT. And I think they would say the same thing. And we thank you for all the fights that you've waged for us, and with your friends in the AFT, and people who love education everywhere. We've had a good 7 years here, thanks in no small measure to you, sir. And we thank you very much.

We have here 54 or 55 State Teachers of the Year, 36 former National Teachers of the Year, and our present honoree, Marilyn Whirry of California. And I want to say a little more about her in a moment.

President Truman presented the first of these awards here at the White House almost half a century ago. And every year since, Presidents or members of their family have personally handed out this award to recog-

nize not only the awardee and the awardees but, indeed, all of our teachers. On that very first occasion, President Truman said, "Next to one's mother, a teacher has the greatest influence on what kind of a citizen a child grows up to be."

Every day, 5 days a week, 9 months a year, teachers have the future of America in their hands. They teach our children to read, to write, to calculate, to sing, to paint, to play, to listen, to question, to work with others, and to think for themselves. They excite our children's imagination, lift their aspirations, open their hearts, strengthen their values.

I imagine every one of us can recall the names and faces of teachers who influenced us profoundly; indeed, so profoundly that without them we wouldn't be sitting here or standing in the Rose Garden today. We tend to remember the teachers most who challenged us the most; the ones who held us to high standards and convinced us we could achieve; teachers who praised us when they knew we were doing our very best; and who motivated us, sometimes gently and sometimes not so gently, to do even better; teachers who watched with delight the amazement on our faces when we produced work we never imagined we were capable of.

For 35 years now, Dr. Marilyn Whirry has been that kind of teacher, instilling in her students a love of literature. Seniors at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California, vie for spots in her advanced placement English class. Even freshmen and sophomores hope some day to join what are called the "Whirryites," in book-lined Room 19, to discuss Shakespeare and Camus, Toni Morrison and Dostoyevski.

Her teaching style, I understand, is like a softer, more nurturing version of Professor Kingsfield's in "The Paper Chase." She paces the room posing questions to each student, responding to each answer with still more questions, digging deeper and deeper into the toughest texts until their meanings are revealed. She believes there are no obstacles to learning that cannot be overcome through effort and high standards. And she lives by that belief.

A few years ago, she underwent treatment for cancer, yet almost never missed a day of work. She not only beat the cancer but that